



# *Information* **UPDATE**

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction/Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent/P.O. Box 7841/ Madison, WI 53707-7841

**BULLETIN NO. 02.03**

**May 2002**

**TO:** District Administrators, CESA Administrators, CCDEB Administrators,  
Directors of Special Education and Pupil Services, and Other Interested Parties

**FROM:** Carolyn Stanford Taylor, Assistant State Superintendent  
Division for Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy

**SUBJECT:** Guidelines for Complying with the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment Part 1

## Background

Federal and state special education legislation requires that all students with disabilities participate in state and district-wide assessments. Specifically, the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states, "children with disabilities are included in general State and district-wide assessment programs with accommodations, where necessary." In addition, the reauthorized IDEA specifies that alternate assessment is to be provided for the small number of students with disabilities for whom the standardized assessment is inappropriate even with accommodations. At present, the statewide assessment system, the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS), includes the Wisconsin Reading Comprehension Test (WRCT) at *third grade*, the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE) at *fourth, eighth, and tenth grades*, and the Wisconsin Alternative Assessment.

In November 2000, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) conducted a peer review of Wisconsin's Student Assessment System (WSAS), the results of which were reported to the department in December 2000. The peer review findings specified certain necessary changes to Wisconsin's assessment system to retain state eligibility for the receipt of Title I funds. These findings included provisions regarding students with disabilities who take alternate assessments.

Title I requires schools, districts, and state profiles to include the performance of all students, including students with disabilities who take an alternate assessment. It was agreed the results of an alternate assessment must be summarized to the state using a four-level Prerequisite Skills (PS Levels) performance standard that places a student on a level that is referenced to the state's model academic standards in each of the domains.

On October 30, 2001, the department submitted a formal request to USDE for a timeline waiver to meet the Title I requirements along with a comprehensive plan, "Enhancing the Wisconsin Student Assessment System," to address all outstanding issues from the USDE peer review. On November 6, 2001, the timeline waiver and plan were approved by USDE. One of the conditions for granting the timeline waiver was that the revised assessment and reporting system be fully implemented in the 2002-03 school year.

## The Wisconsin Alternate Assessment (WAA)

The Wisconsin Alternate Assessment (WAA) is part of the WSAS and is designed to assess the educational performance of students with disabilities who cannot meaningfully take the regular (WKCE) test or the local assessment of oral language even with accommodations. The WAA, which is a checklist completed by teachers, will focus on knowledge and skills that are aligned with Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in reading, language arts including oral language, mathematics, science, and social studies. These knowledge and skills are considered to be prerequisite to the majority of content assessed by WKCE.

### The WAA Participation Checklist

IEP teams are responsible for deciding whether students with disabilities will participate in an assessment with or without testing accommodations or will take an alternate assessment. To facilitate informed and equitable decision-making, the department designed a participant checklist for IEP teams to use when making these decisions.

The WAA Participation Checklist will be a required document to be used by IEP teams in order to meet Title I requirements. This checklist is attached and will be available on the Special Education Team website. For the school year 2002-2003, if this decision has already been made, the IEP team does not have to reconvene.

For the 2002-2003 school year, the decision about participation in an assessment with or without testing accommodations will presume to include a decision about assessment of oral language since oral language is a part of language arts. For those students who participate in WAA, the checklist will have a subset of items within language arts that address oral language.

### Testing Window

The WKCE testing window for the 2002-2003 school year is November 6, 2002 to November 22, 2002. Students who will be taking the WAA may begin in September or as soon as the district receives the WAA. The testing will need to be completed by November 22, 2002. The results of the WAA will then be submitted to the department with the WKCE results.

### Professional Development and Workshops on New WAA

The department is engaged in a project with Dr. Stephen Elliott to develop the WAA. Field testing will be completed by the end of May 2002. The actual WAA document will be available in July 2002. A series of workshops to explain the WAA, and how to administer and grade the WAA, will be held starting in July, with teacher workshops in August and September 2002.

### Upcoming Bulletins

Additional updates will be provided in the near future. These will include a description of the WAA, and how to administer, score and report the results of the assessment.

Questions regarding this bulletin may be directed to Sandra Berndt at (608) 266-1785.

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This information update can also be accessed through the Internet:

<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlse/een/bulindex.html>

# WISCONSIN ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION CHECKLIST

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School:** \_\_\_\_\_

IEP teams are responsible for deciding whether students with disabilities will participate in the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations, with or without testing accommodations, or in the Wisconsin Alternate Assessment. To facilitate informed and equitable decision-making, IEP teams should address each of the following statements **for each of the content areas**, when considering an alternate assessment. Check all that apply.

When the IEP team concurs that **all four of the statements** below accurately characterize a student's current educational situation in a given content area, then an **alternate assessment** should be used to provide a meaningful evaluation of the student's current academic achievement in that content area. Content areas without four checks should be assessed using the regular assessment, with or without accommodations.

<i><b>Participation Criteria</b></i>	<i><b>Reading</b></i>	<i><b>Language Arts</b></i>	<i><b>Math</b></i>	<i><b>Science</b></i>	<i><b>Social Studies</b></i>
1. Student's curriculum and daily instruction focuses on knowledge and skills <u>significantly different</u> from those represented by the state's content standards for students of the same chronological age.					
2. Student's present level of educational performance significantly impedes participation and completion of the general education curriculum even with significant program modifications.					
3. Student requires extensive direct instruction to accomplish the acquisition, application, and transfer of knowledge and skills.					
4. Student's difficulty with the regular curriculum demands is primarily due to his/her disabilities, and not to excessive absences unrelated to the disability, or social, cultural or environmental factors.					

## ASSUMPTIONS:

- The IEP team has knowledge of the student's present level of educational performance in reference to the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.
- The IEP team has working knowledge of the test format and what skills and knowledge are being measured by the statewide assessments such as, Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations and Wisconsin Reading Comprehension Test.
- The IEP team is knowledgeable of state testing guidelines and the use of appropriate testing accommodations.